

## U.S. police rarely deploy deadly robots to confront suspects



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Associated Press

By JANIE HAR and CLAUDIA LAUER  
Associated Press

**SAN FRANCISCO (AP)** — The unabashedly liberal city of San Francisco became the unlikely proponent of weaponized police robots last week after supervisors approved limited use of the remote-controlled devices, addressing head-on an evolving technology that has become more widely available even if it is rarely deployed to confront suspects.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted 8-3 on Tuesday to permit police to use robots armed with explosives in extreme situations where lives are at stake and no other alternative is available. The authorization comes as police departments across the U.S. face increasing scrutiny for the use of militarized equipment and force amid a years-long reckoning on criminal justice. The vote was prompted by a new California law requiring police to inventory military-grade equipment such as flash-

bang grenades, assault rifles and armored vehicles, and seek approval from the public for their use.

So far, police in just two California cities — San Francisco and Oakland — have publicly discussed the use of robots as part of that process. Around the country, police have used robots over the past decade to communicate with barricaded suspects, enter potentially dangerous spaces and, in rare cases, for deadly force.

Dallas police became the first to kill a suspect with a robot in 2016, when they used one to detonate explosives during a standoff with a sniper who had killed five police officers and injured nine others. The recent San Francisco vote, has renewed a fierce debate sparked years ago over the ethics of using robots to kill a suspect and the doors such policies might open.

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# U.S. police rarely deploy deadly robots to confront suspects



A police officer uses a robot to investigate a bomb threat in San Francisco, on July 25, 2008.

## Continued from Front

Largely, experts say, the use of such robots remains rare even as the technology advances.

Michael White, a professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University, said even if robotics companies present deadlier options at tradeshow, it doesn't mean police departments will buy them. White said companies made specialized claymores to end barricades and scrambled to equip body-worn cameras with facial recognition software, but departments didn't want them.

"Because communities didn't support that level of surveillance. It's hard to say what will happen in the future, but I think weaponized robots very well could be the next thing that departments don't want because communities are saying they don't want them," White said.

Robots or otherwise, San Francisco official David Chiu, who authored the California bill when in the state legislature, said communities deserve more transparency from law enforcement and to have a say in the use of militarized equipment.

San Francisco "just happened to be the city that tackled a topic that I certainly didn't contemplate when the law was going through the process, and that dealt with the subject of so-called killer robots," said Chiu, now the city attorney.

In 2013, police maintained their distance and used a robot to lift a tarp as part of a manhunt for the Boston Marathon bombing suspect, finding him hiding underneath it. Three years later, Dallas police officials sent a bomb disposal robot packed with explosives into an alcove of El Centro College to end an hours-long standoff with sniper Micah Xavier Johnson, who had opened fire on officers as a protest against police brutality was ending.

Police detonated the explosives, becoming the first department to use a robot to kill a suspect. A grand jury declined charges against the officers, and then-Dallas Police Chief David O. Brown was widely praised for his handling of the shooting and the standoff.

"There was this spray of doom about how police departments were going to use robots in the six months after Dallas," said Mark Lo-

max, former executive director of the National Tactical Officers Association. "But since then, I had not heard a lot about that platform being used to neutralize suspects ... until the San Francisco policy was in the news."

The question of potentially lethal robots has not yet cropped up in public discourse in California as more than 500 police and sheriffs departments seek approval for their military-grade weapons use policy under the new state law. Oakland police abandoned the idea of arming robots with shotguns after public backlash, but will outfit them with pepper spray.

Many of the use policies already approved are vague as to armed robots, and some departments may presume they have implicit permission to deploy them, said John Lindsay-Poland, who has been monitoring implementation of the new law as part of the American Friends Service Committee. "I do think most departments are not prepared to use their robots for lethal force," he said, "but if asked, I suspect there are other departments that would say, 'we want that authority.'"

San Francisco Supervisor

## Associated Press

Aaron Peskin first proposed prohibiting police from using robot force against any person. But the department said while it would not outfit robots with firearms, it wanted the option to attach explosives to breach barricades or disorient a suspect.

The approved policy allows only a limited number of high-ranking officers to authorize use of robots as a deadly force — and only when lives are at stake and after exhausting alternative force or de-escalation tactics, or concluding they would not be able to subdue the suspect through alternate means.

San Francisco police say the dozen functioning ground robots the department already has have never been used to deliver an explosive device, but are used to assess bombs or provide eyes in low visibility situations.

"We live in a time when unthinkable mass violence is becoming more commonplace. We need the option to be able to save lives in the event we have that type of tragedy in our city," San Francisco Police Chief Bill Scott said in a statement.

Los Angeles Police Department does not have

any weaponized robots or drones, said SWAT Lt. Ruben Lopez. He declined to detail why his department did not seek permission for armed robots, but confirmed they would need authorization to deploy one.

"It's a violent world, so we'll cross that bridge when we come to it," he said.

There are often better options than robots if lethal force is needed, because bombs can create collateral damage to buildings and people, said Lomax, the former head of the tactical officers group. "For a lot of departments, especially in populated cities, those factors are going to add too much risk," he said.

Last year, the New York Police Department returned a leased robotic dog sooner than expected after public backlash, indicating that civilians are not yet comfortable with the idea of machines chasing down humans.

Police in Maine have used robots at least twice to deliver explosives meant to take down walls or doors and bring an end to standoffs. In June 2018, in the tiny town of Dixmont, Maine, police had intended to use a robot to deliver a small explosive that would knock down an exterior wall, but instead collapsed the roof of the house.

The man inside was shot twice after the explosion, survived and pleaded no contest to reckless conduct with a firearm. The state later settled his lawsuit against the police challenging that they had used the explosives improperly.

In April 2020, Maine police used a small charge to blow a door off of a home during a standoff. The suspect was fatally shot by police when he exited through the damaged doorway and fired a weapon.

As of this week, the state attorney general's office had not completed its review of the tactics used in the 2018 standoff, including the use of the explosive charge. A report on the 2020 incident only addressed the fatal gunfire. □

# Justices spar in latest clash of religion and gay rights

By JESSICA GRESKO and  
MARK SHERMAN

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Supreme Court's conservative majority sounded sympathetic Monday to a Christian graphic artist who objects to designing wedding websites for gay couples, a dispute that's the latest clash of religion and gay rights to land at the highest court.

The designer and her supporters say that ruling against her would force artists from painters and photographers to writers and musicians to do work that is against their beliefs. Her opponents, meanwhile, say that if she wins, a range of businesses will be able to discriminate, refusing to serve Black customers, Jewish or Muslim people, interracial or interfaith couples or immigrants, among others.

Over more than two hours of spirited arguments, the justices repeatedly tested out what ruling for the designer could mean, using detailed and sometimes colorful hypothetical scenarios. Those included a Black Santa asked to take a picture with a child dressed in a Ku Klux Klan outfit, a photographer asked to take pictures for the Jewish dating website JDate



Lorie Smith, a Christian graphic artist and website designer in Colorado, right, accompanied by her lawyer, Kristen Waggoner of the Alliance Defending Freedom, second from left, speaks outside the Supreme Court in Washington, Monday, Dec. 5, 2022, after her case was heard before the Supreme Court.

and also the marital infidelity website Ashley Madison, and a food business called "Grandma Helen's Protestant Provisions."

Justice Neil Gorsuch, one of three high court appointees of former President Donald Trump, described Lorie Smith, the website designer in the case, as "an individual who says she will sell and does sell to everyone, all manner of websites, (but) that she won't sell a website that requires her to express a view about

marriage that she finds offensive." Where to draw the line for what a business might do without violating state anti-discrimination laws was a big question in Monday's arguments at the high court. Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson asked whether a photography store in a shopping mall could refuse to take pictures of Black people on Santa's lap.

"Their policy is that only white children can be photographed with Santa in this

way, because that's how they view the scenes with Santa that they're trying to depict," Jackson said.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor repeatedly pressed Kristen Waggoner, the lawyer for Smith, over other categories. "How about people who don't believe in interracial marriage? Or about people who don't believe that disabled people should get married? Where's the line?" Sotomayor asked.

But Justice Samuel Alito,

who seemed to favor Smith, asked whether it's "fair to equate opposition to same-sex marriage to opposition to interracial marriage?" The case comes at a time when the court is dominated 6-3 by conservatives and follows a series of cases in which the justices have sided with religious plaintiffs. Across the street from the court, lawmakers at the Capitol are finalizing what would be a landmark bill protecting same-sex marriage.

The proposed law, which also would protect interracial marriage, has gained momentum following the high court's decision earlier this year to end constitutional protections for abortion. That decision to overturn the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling prompted questions about whether the court now that it is more conservative might also overturn its 2015 decision declaring a nationwide right to same-sex marriage.

The case being argued before the high court Monday involves Smith, a graphic artist and website designer in Colorado who wants to begin offering wedding websites. Smith says her Christian faith prevents her from creating websites celebrating same-sex marriages. □

Associated Press

## Emhoff to host Jewish leaders for discussion of anti-Semitism

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Doug

Emhoff, the husband of Vice President Kamala Harris, will host Jewish leaders

this week to discuss a rise in antisemitism and efforts to fight hate in the United States.

The White House roundtable on Wednesday follows a surge in anti-Jewish vitriol spread by a famous rapper, an NBA star and other prominent people.

Emhoff is the first Jewish person among the top four officials the president, vice president and their spouses in the executive branch of government, and he has become increasingly outspoken about growing bias toward adherents of the Jewish faith, and hate at large, in the U.S.

"It's painful, it hurts," Emhoff said Friday after he was

asked about rising antisemitism during an appearance at the NewDEAL Leaders conference of state and local officials in Washington. Former President Donald Trump recently hosted Nick Fuentes, a Holocaust-denying white supremacist, at Trump's Mar-a-Lago home in Florida.

The rapper Ye formerly known as Kanye West expressed love for Adolf Hitler in an interview. Basketball star Kyrie Irving appeared to promote an antisemitic film on social media. Neo-Nazi trolls are clamoring to return to Twitter as new CEO Elon Musk grants "amnesty" to suspended accounts.

Emhoff, in his response at the conference, said he did not want this type of sentiment to "feel normal." "I don't want people to think, 'Well, it's just words,'" he said. "We have to all step up and speak out about this as leaders in your communities. So as long as I have this microphone, I'm going to keep speaking up, speaking out, and again, not just about antisemitism but about hatred and bringing everyone else together."

"This is not OK. It's not OK," Emhoff continued. "We cannot be silent. We gotta push back. We gotta speak up. And we cannot make this normal. We cannot." □



Doug Emhoff, the husband of Vice President Kamala Harris, speaks during a reception to celebrate the Jewish new year in the East Room of the White House in Washington, Sept. 30, 2022.

Associated Press

# Bribery, fraud charges dismissed against ex-NY Lt. Governor

By LARRY NEUMEISTER

Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Bribery and fraud charges against former New York Lt. Gov. Brian Benjamin were tossed out Monday by a federal judge, leaving Benjamin to face only records falsification charges and prompting his lawyers to say it was tragic that the case was ever brought.

Judge J. Paul Oetken in a written opinion said prosecutors failed to allege an explicit example in which Benjamin provided a favor for a bribe, an essential element of bribery and honest services fraud charges.

Benjamin, a Democrat, resigned after his arrest last April. He pleaded not guilty to charges that he obtained campaign contributions from a real estate developer in exchange for his influence to get a \$50,000 grant of state funds for a nonprofit organization the developer controlled. Benjamin's arrest had created a political crisis for Gov. Kathy Hochul, a fellow Democrat who chose him to serve as second-in-command when she became governor following a sexual harassment scandal that drove from office her



Former New York Lieutenant Governor Brian Benjamin leaves a hearing in federal court on April 18, 2022, in New York.

predecessor, Democrat Andrew Cuomo.

At the time of his arrest, Benjamin's lawyers had issued a statement saying they planned to show the courts that their client's actions were laudable rather than a crime.

On Monday, attorneys Barry Berke and Dani James said in a statement that the ruling "shows how these wrongful charges so harmed Mr. Benjamin and

unfairly cost him his position as Lt. Governor."

"While today is a great day for justice, democracy and the rule of law, it is tragic that this case was ever brought and such a decision was necessary," they said. "From the very beginning, we said we are shocked and dismayed that the prosecution would bring such flimsy and unwarranted charges based on nothing more than rou-

tine fundraising and support of a non-profit providing needed resources to Harlem public schools," the attorneys said.

They wrote that Benjamin was "thankful for his vindication and looks forward to new opportunities to serve the people of New York and his Harlem community."

A spokesperson for prosecutors declined comment. Benjamin was the state's

Associated Press

second Black lieutenant governor. During a state Legislature career that began in May 2017, he emphasized criminal justice reform and affordable housing. His district included most of central Harlem, where he was born and raised by Caribbean immigrant parents.

In tossing out the first three charges in a five-count indictment, the judge wrote that appeals courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, have made clear that proof of a promise was necessary to support criminal charges when payments are made in the form of campaign contributions. The judge said he also agreed with a separate defense argument that the facts alleged in the indictment, even if true, fail to establish criminal liability. He noted that the government's timeline of events show that there was no agreement between the Benjamin and the developer at the time Benjamin procured the \$50,000 in state funding. The charges that were left intact allege that Benjamin knowingly made a false entry in a record with the intent to impede an investigation. □

# Avenatti sentenced to 14 years in California fraud case

AMY TAXIN

Associated Press

**SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP)** — Incarcerated lawyer Michael Avenatti was sentenced in Southern California on Monday to 14 years in prison and ordered to pay \$7 million in restitution

after admitting he cheated four of his clients out of millions of dollars.

The sentence should run consecutively to the five-year prison term he is currently serving for separate convictions in New York, U.S. District Judge James V.

Selna said during a hearing in Santa Ana, California.

Avenatti pleaded guilty earlier this year to four counts of wire fraud and a tax-related charge without reaching a plea deal with federal prosecutors, saying he wanted to be accountable and spare his family further embarrassment. He was accused of negotiating and collecting settlement payments on behalf of his clients and instead funneling the money to accounts he controlled.

Before sentencing, Avenatti apologized to the four victims in the case, three of whom were in the courtroom.

"I am deeply remorseful and contrite," Avenatti said. "There is no doubt that all of them deserve much

better, and I hope that someday they will accept my apologies and find it in their heart to forgive me."

Prosecutor Brett Sagel told the court that Avenatti's criminal conduct "arose from calculated choices and egregious violations of the trust" his clients placed in him.

"He didn't turn to his criminal actions by desperation, by need, by the inability to do anything else," Sagel said. "Despite the significant advantages that this defendant had a first-rate education, a thriving legal career he chose to commit the deplorable acts in this case time and time again."

The government dropped all other remaining charges against Avenatti stemming

from a 36-count indictment.

Avenatti is currently serving time in a Southern California prison on two separate cases. He was convicted of stealing book proceeds from Stormy Daniels, the porn actor who catapulted him to fame as he represented her during her legal battles with then-President Donald Trump, and of trying to extort Nike if the shoemaker didn't pay him up to \$25 million.

Avenatti represented Daniels in her lawsuit to break a confidentiality agreement with Trump to stay mum about an affair she said they had and became one of Trump's leading adversaries, attacking him on cable news programs and Twitter. □



Michael Avenatti speaks to members of the media after leaving federal court on Feb. 4, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

# Eyeing power, U.K. Labour Party vows to abolish House of Lords

By JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

**LONDON (AP)** — Britain's opposition Labour Party on Monday pledged to scrap Parliament's unelected upper house if it wins government as part of a raft of policies intended to stake out Labour's ground for the next election.

The left-of-center party has been out of power since 2010, but has a big lead in opinion polls after months of scandal and economic turmoil for the governing Conservatives. Labour is seeking to cement its place as a government-in-waiting with a raft of policy proposals it says will transfer decision-making power from the central government in London to cities and regions around the U.K.

Labour leader Keir Starmer said the current House of Lords is "indefensible" and he would replace it with an elected chamber as soon as possible after taking office. The next national election must be held by 2024. The House of Lords reviews legislation passed by the elected House of Commons, and for most of its 900-year history was composed of hereditary nobles.



Labour Party leader Keir Starmer speaks during a Labour Party press conference to launch a report on constitutional change and political reform, at Nexus, University of Leeds, in Leeds, England, Monday, Dec. 5, 2022.

Associated Press

Reform of the Lords is a thorny issue that has bedeviled successive governments. A previous Labour government under Prime Minister Tony Blair swept hundreds of hereditary nobles from the chamber two decades ago, replacing them with "life peers" appointed by the government and political parties. But attempts at further reform have stalled.

With life peers sitting alongside a smattering of judges, bishops and dozens of remaining hereditary nobles, the Lords currently has about 800 members making it the second-largest legislative chamber in the world, after China's National People's Congress. Labour proposes replacing it with a smaller, democratic "assembly of nations and regions." The idea is among

proposals drawn up for the party by Gordon Brown, the U.K.'s last Labour prime minister. Brown, who led the country between 2007 and 2010, recommended giving cities and regions more power to raise and spend money. He also proposed more powers for Scotland and Wales, which already have semi-autonomous parliament based in Edinburgh and Cardiff.

Brown said that would help defuse demands for Scottish independence from the Scottish National Party government in Edinburgh.

"That's going to be the debate from now on in – not independence versus the status quo, but change within Britain versus change by leaving Britain," he said. Starmer said he wanted to implement the proposals within five years of taking office, arguing that the U.K.'s regions were being "held back by a system that hoards power in Westminster."

"Britain is one of the most centralized systems in Europe and the center has not delivered," he said at an event in Leeds, northern England.

Labour is trying to draw firm lines between itself and the right-of-center Conservative Party, which is on its third prime minister since winning a big majority in 2019 under Boris Johnson. Johnson was pushed out by his party in July after a string of ethics scandals, and successor Liz Truss quit after less than two months when her tax-cutting economic plans sparked market turmoil.

# In Bolivia, literacy training makes a profound difference

By CARLOS VALDEZ

Associated Press

**PUCARANI, Bolivia (AP)** — Anacleta Mamani has no teeth, but a happy smile: She's learned to read and write at the age of 71, and now feels so empowered,

she wants to run a road race in her indigenous community in the Bolivian highlands near La Paz. Mamami is among more than 20,000 senior citizens, mainly women from low-income rural communities,

who have learned to read and write this year as part of "Bolivia Reads," a government-sponsored literacy program.

"I don't want to die without knowing how to read and write," said Mamami, who learned to do both in Aymara, her mother tongue. She joined nearly a thousand other Indigenous people who displayed reading, math and other skills to juries and shared a communal meal before receiving their literacy certificates on Sunday in the central plaza of Pucarani, the main town of the region near Lake Titicaca.

Bolivia, one of the poorest nations in South America, had an illiteracy rate of 23% in 1995. Thanks to "Bolivia Reads," that's been

reduced to 2.7%, making Bolivia one of the region's countries with good levels of literacy, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Most of the students had to work as children, or couldn't afford the costs. Some never stepped foot in a school.

Susana Falcón, the education secretary of the town of Pucarani, gets emotional as she recalls the tears of a 90-year-old man when he was able to write his own name.

These are determined learners, but the lessons have come awfully late for some, and they all need the government's help, said Carlos Montes, an adult education teacher.

"Many came here by foot from distant communities. They're motivated to learn, but they sleep during the classes, and some soon forget their lessons because they've got symptoms of Alzheimer's," Montes said.

Wilma Mamani, 36, had to quit school as a child to help her parents in the fields.

She learned to read and write this year so she could help her children.

"Many times I felt ashamed, not being able to help them when they had questions with their homework," she said.

Illiteracy is highest in the most rural areas of Bolivia, particularly in the semi-arid flatlands between Andean peaks, more than 3,800 meters above sea level.



Aymara Indigenous women smile after receiving their certificate during an adult literacy graduation ceremony in Pucarani, Bolivia, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2022.

Associated Press

## Sudan's generals, pro-democracy group ink deal to end crisis

By **ASHRAF IDRIS and JACK JEFFERY**

**Associated Press**

**KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) —**

Sudan's coup leaders and the main pro-democracy group signed a deal Monday to establish a civilian-led transitional government following the military takeover last year.

But key players refused to participate, and no deadline was set for the transition to begin.

The framework signed by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo and the leaders of the Forces for the Declaration of Freedom and Change appears to offer only the broadest outlines for how the country will resume its progression to democracy.

That process was upended in October 2021, when Burhan unseated the civilian half of Sudan's ruling Sovereignty Council with Dagalo's backing.

Since the coup, international aid has dried up and bread and fuel shortages, caused in part by the war in Ukraine, have become routine, plunging Sudan's already inflation-riddled economy into deeper



**Sudan's Army chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, center, and others hold a document following the signature of an initial deal aimed at ending a deep crisis caused by last year's military coup, in Khartoum, Sudan, Monday, Dec. 5, 2022.**

peril. Security forces have ruthlessly suppressed near-weekly pro-democracy marches. Deadly tribal clashes have flared in the country's neglected peripheries.

It's not clear whether or how quickly the deal signed Monday can offer a way out for Sudan, given that it appears to leave many thorny issues unre-

solved and doesn't have the support of key political forces, including the grassroots pro-democracy Resistance Committees. That network's leaders called for demonstrations against the agreement.

Several former rebel leaders, who have formed their own political bloc, have also rejected the deal.

Many of the points in a

draft of the deal were already promised in a 2020 agreement that saw Sudan's previous transitional government make peace with several rebels in Sudan's far-flung provinces. According to the draft, the deal envisions Sudan's military eventually stepping back from politics. The document says it will form part of a new "security and

defense council" under the appointed prime minister. But it does not address how to reform the armed forces, saying only they should be unified and controls should be imposed on military-owned companies.

It makes specific mention of Sudan's wealthy paramilitary force, the Rapid Support Forces, headed by Dagalo. The force amassed wealth through its gradual acquisition of Sudanese financial institutions and gold reserves in recent years.

It also does not address creating a transitional judiciary system or say when the transitional government will be put in place. Only then will a two-year transition officially begin the end goal of which is elections.

Analysts have cast doubt over whether the aims of the agreement are achievable, given its lack of detail on key issues and the boycott of key players.

"Realistically none of these complex processes can be dealt with within a transitional time frame of two years," said Kholood Khair, founder and director of Confluence Advisory, a think tank in Khartoum. □

**Associated Press**

## Russia's Putin drives across repaired bridge to Crimea

**MOSCOW (AP) —** Russian President Vladimir Putin tried to boost Russian morale Monday by driving a vehicle across a bridge to Crimea that a truck bomb had damaged in October. Putin took the wheel of a Mercedes to drive across the bridge that links Russia's mainland with the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow annexed from Ukraine in 2014. Like other Western automakers, Mercedes halted sales of vehicles to Russia and stopped production at its assembly plant near Moscow after the start of Russia's military operation in Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Putin did not try to make a political point by

driving the Mercedes and not a Russian-made Auris sedan, saying the president just used the car that was available.

While driving, Putin discussed the repairs of the Crimean Bridge with Marat Khusnullin, a deputy prime minister in charge of the project, an exchange that was broadcast by Russian television.

The president also spoke to workers involved in restoring the 19-kilometer (12-mile) bridge, which has been the main conduit for ferrying supplies to Crimea that has served as a key base for Russian military operations in Ukraine.

In view of Ukrainian threats to launch new attacks on

the bridge, Putin emphasized the need to build a highway along the Sea of Azov coast to link Crimea with regions in southern Russia, the Kremlin said.

The Oct. 8 truck bomb attack disrupted travel on one of the two automobile lanes of the bridge. Russia blamed the attack on Ukrainian military intelligence and responded with several waves of strikes on Ukraine's energy facilities and other key infrastructure.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said last week that widespread strikes targeting power, telecommunications and water infrastructure were intended to weaken Ukraine's military



**Russian President Vladimir Putin, second left, listens to Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin, left, as he visits the Crimean Bridge connecting Russian mainland and Crimean peninsula over the Kerch Strait, which was damaged by a truck bomb attack in October, after restoration works, not far from Kerch, Crimea, Monday, Dec. 5, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

potential and to derail shipments of Western weapons. Ukrainian authorities said there was another such barrage on Monday, hours after Russian media reported two explosions at air

bases in Russia.

One reportedly happened at a base that houses nuclear-capable strategic bombers that have been involved in launching strikes in Ukraine. □

## Focus remains on our beaches, our people and hospitality, as well as security: Aruba Tourism Authority continues investing in enhancing and developing Aruba's product



**ORANJESTAD – As part of ATA's duty to market and manage Aruba as a touristic destination, there are different projects in which ATA invests. These are projects both to enhance the product as well as projects to develop the product.**

These projects are aligned with the national policy for tourism. It can be said that 90 percent of ATA's spending goes to marketing, and from this, between five to

ten percent goes to our touristic product, with the rest going for international marketing.

There are three main focus areas as part of these projects, which are our beaches, our people and hospitality, as well as security. Attention is given to other aspects, like protection of nature, culture and innovation. But the main three areas are the foundation of tourism in Aruba.

### Our Beaches

One of the projects that are taking place currently are the renovation and enhancing of the platforms and towers at Palm Beach. This is not an isolated project, seeing that for many years already, investment is made in the area. For example, the study that was carried out to measure the quality of water in Palm Beach, as well as placing buoys in order to mark the



area designated for swimming. In 2023 the buoys project will continue also in order to mark the buffer zone for motorized traffic on the water.

### Our people and hospitality

Focus will continue on preparation and knowledge of our people, through among others, the Aruba Certification Program, the Aruba Quality Seal, as well as the Aruba Signature Experience. These projects are beneficial for our tourism industry, but also for our island in general, since they help to improve the experience of our visitors, and this surely elevates the satisfaction with our destination.

### Security

Another extremely important aspect in which investment is made is security. Aruba is known as one of the safest destinations in the Caribbean, and this is one of the top three reasons why tourists visit our island. This safety is important for tourism but also for the quality of life of our community, so focus continues on this area in 2023 as well.

Here it is worth noting that since 2011, when ATA became Sui Generis, support is given to Aruba Hospitality and Security Foundation. In this foundation there are members of ATA, KPA (Police Force of Aruba), AHATA (Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association), ATIA (Aruba Trade & Industry Association) and some professionals in the area of security in the hotel sector. Through this foundation, focus is placed on safety in the touristic zone. Investments were made in equipment for the police, including the Strandpolitie (police on the beach), regular training, advice of an international security organization, and more. For 2023, funds were allocated to reintroduce a Visibility Team in order to ensure better security, visibility and presence of members of security in the touristic areas.

Each of the projects financed by ATA are important, because they contribute to elevate the touristic product that at this time is our main economic pillar, and provides a living for us all. □



## Maybelline Arends-Croes received the Crioyo di Oro award

**ORANJESTAD** - On November 30, 2022 the Go Cultura Foundation awarded the National Crioyo di Oro Award was to Mrs. Maybelline Arends-Croes at the Cas di Cultura.

During this special event, they also dedicated a gala concert to her.


Mrs. Arends-Croes received this recognition for her immense support of our culture.

The evening featured various artists, including The Young Voices, Grupo Melange, Cesar Olarte, Erika Giel, Gloria Vega, Rocco Franken, Rachel Kraaijvanger, Edjeane Semeleer, and many other surprises. A musical orchestra accompanied the artists.

The Prime Minister of Aruba congratulated Mrs. Maybelline Arends-Croes through a video message recorded earlier in which she said the following: "I want to congratulate Mrs. Maybelline for all her achievements during her long career for the culture of Aruba. And I thank you for everything you have done and meant for our culture. I know Mrs. Maybelline since attending Colegio Arubano, and she inspired me to like and appreciate music. Maybelline had a political career, and as a female politician, she considerably impacted me. Maybelline helped inspire many children, youngsters, and adults in her career. May God bless you. I hope you can enjoy the special recognition and continue to delight us with the talent that God gave you."

The Prime Minister thanked all who made this recognition event possible for Maybelline Arends-Croes. Thanks to Go Cultura Foundation for awarding Maybelline with the Crioyo di Oro Award. □






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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Dolores Rutski.

She wrote to us with a very sweet story about a doll who got to return home to Aruba after many many years.

Dolores wrote; "Aruba to me is a mix of family and Aruban/world history and lifetime connections. During WWII my Uncle Vinnie who was serving in the US Merchant Marines. I was about 3 when he brought me an Aruban doll. I never played with it, just kept her safe and admired her. Later in life I married and we spent our honeymoon here in Aruba. There were only three hotels here then. On our annual trip last year we stayed at the Divi Dutch villas and we discovered the historic Bunker Bar. Until then I had never made the connection of my Uncle with this country. I decided to bring my doll, who is over 80 years old back to Aruba so she could be in her na-



tive land once more."

Thank you for sharing this lovely story with us. ☐



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## Aruba's underwater wonderland



**ORANJESTAD** - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating underwater spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.

### Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute

drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

### Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands



of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken world war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

### Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

### Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □



## Culinary event review: Kulture Café

On December 3, 2022 Aruba Today was present at the fine dining occasion organized by the proprietor Mr. Nicholas Gordon of Nicolas Store, better known as Kulture Café, an iconic café in the middle of San Nicolas, the second largest town in Aruba.

The host Chef for this evening was Roy Engelen, a young entrepreneur of chef's table restaurant Royal at Wilhelminastraat 18, downtown Oranjestad. Chef Roy has more than 25 years cooking experience in the Netherlands, including a 2 star Michelin restaurant and other renowned international restaurants.

Upon arrival we were welcomed and immediately seated at our table. The setting was outside in the open air which being in San Nicolas made it an amazing event. The chef surprised us with amuse-bouche of dark roasted cauliflower soup topped with a chicken dumpling.

The restaurant offered a wine pairing created together with Boma wines to enhance your dinner, however they offered wine by the glass as well. We did not go for the wine pairing, but rather ordered our own drinks. Service was excellent. Since I requested a glass of ice to keep my water cold, the servers kept on replacing the empty glass, which to me is a big plus for my fine dining experience.

### Our menu consisted of:

#### Amuse:

Dark roasted cauliflower soup with smoked olive oil and a chicken dumpling

#### Course 1:

Peruvian causa - grouper ceviche - sweet potato cream with aji amarillo - cancha corn - blackened avocado - cilantro micro greens

#### Course 2:

Japanese chicken salad - homemade caramel cookie - pickled cucumber - yuzu foam - mustard cress

#### Course 3:

Caramelized Brussel endive - puff pastry - cooked shrimps - beurre blanc- fresh basil - parmesan cheese

#### Course 4:

Tenderloin stuffed with beef shoulder stew - pumpkin puree - grilled green asparagus - green pepper corn sauce

#### Course 5:

Key lime pie - meringue - lemon curd - cookie crumble - freeze dry raspberry's - lemon coconut sorbet

All in all the setting, the food, cordiality and especially the service made it a fine dining experience. □



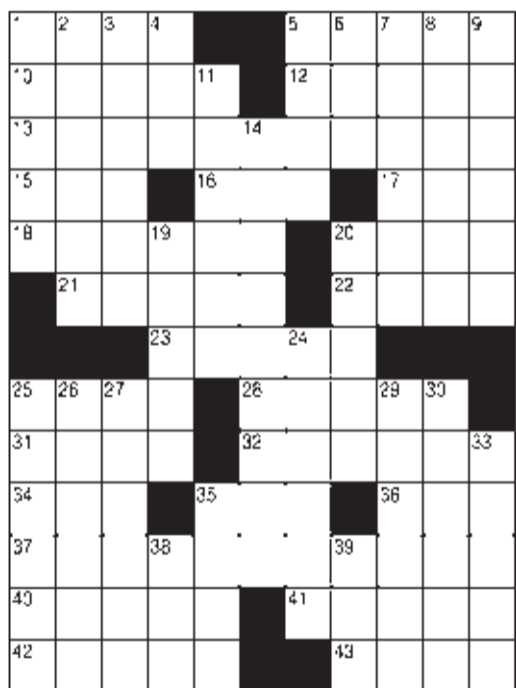
# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 41 Play division coin
  - 5 Castle light
  - 10 Sports spot
  - 12 Midwest airport
  - 13 One slow to develop
  - 15 Twisty turn
  - 16 Lab animal
  - 17 Zodiac animal
  - 18 Painter Georges
  - 20 Romantic flower
  - 21 Black card
  - 22 Mid-month day
  - 23 Harvest goddess
  - 25 Pillage
  - 28 Having tattoos
  - 31 Important times
  - 32 Fashions
  - 34 Play division
  - 35 Flower visitor
  - 36 Angry rock
  - 37 One who was held up
  - 40 Not rented out
- DOWN**
- 1 Loses color
  - 2 Makes blank
  - 3 Establishes
  - 4 Count start
  - 5 Horn sound
  - 6 Cry of surprise
  - 7 Strict boss
  - 8 Fold
  - 9 Messenger god
  - 11 Wear down
  - 14 One who sleeps in
  - 19 Store fixtures
  - 20 Fraught with peril
  - 24 Comes in
  - 25 Close tightly
  - 26 Mysterious
  - 27 Some stock
  - 29 Late hour
  - 30 Insist
  - 33 Foot parts
  - 35 Diamond clubs
  - 38 Slippery swimmer
  - 39 Road hazard



Yesterday's answer



12-6

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-6

CRYPTOQUOTE

BN KNSZ D LZUWNM OW BN  
WZZ DKK BYZOU ADPOR. DMC  
BN UZAOMC BYZA NE OB VYZM  
BYZQ YDSZ ENUPNBBZM.

— T M I M N V M

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: TO APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY OF A SNOWFLAKE, IT IS NECESSARY TO STAND OUT IN THE COLD. — ANONYMOUS

## Make the most of new rules for charitable giving

By LIZ WESTON  
of NerdWallet

Most people no longer get a tax deduction when they donate to charity. That shouldn't keep you from making donations, but you may want to change your approach.

Typically, only taxpayers who itemize deductions can write off charitable contributions. The vast majority of taxpayers instead take the standard deduction, which was nearly doubled by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. (Temporary provisions in pandemic relief legislation allowed taxpayers to deduct \$300 of their donations in 2020 and 2021 without itemizing, but those provisions have expired.)

It has never made sense to donate solely to get a deduction. If you're in the 22% federal tax bracket, for example, you save only 22 cents in taxes for each dollar you give away. If you're charitably minded, however, there may still be ways to get a tax break for your generosity with some planning, or you could reconsider how you give money away.

### DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS AREN'T JUST FOR THE RICH

Tax experts recommend "bunching" deductions when people's itemized deductions are close to the standard deduction limits, which in 2023 will be \$13,850 for single filers and \$27,700 for married couples filing jointly. Bunching allows taxpayers to take the standard deduction one year while moving as many itemized expenses as possible into another year. If you're maximizing deductions for this year, for example, you might pay your



This undated file photo provided by NerdWallet shows Liz Weston, a columnist for personal finance website NerdWallet.com. Associated Press

January 2023 mortgage payment in December or make two years' worth of charitable donations.

One way to bunch deductions is to use a donor-advised fund, an account that allows you to contribute a lump sum in one year and then parcel out the money in future years to the charities of your choice, says financial adviser Mark Astrinos, a certified public accountant and personal financial specialist in the San Francisco Bay Area. Donor-advised funds are offered by major investment companies as well as universities, community foundations and various charities. If the client normally gives about \$5,000 a year to charity, Astrinos might encourage that person to contribute three years' worth of donations, or \$15,000, to a donor-advised fund. The donation would allow the client to exceed the standard deduction for a single filer and potentially make other expenses, such as mortgage interest and property taxes, deductible again.

### DONATING STOCK MAY OF-

### FER 'A DOUBLE TAX BENEFIT'

A stock that soared in value since you bought it can create a big tax bill when you sell. You can avoid that bill if you give the stock to a qualified charity or to your donor-advised fund. If you're able to itemize deductions, you also can take a deduction for the stock's current price on the day of your donation. Astrinos uses the example of someone who invested \$10,000 in shares that are now worth \$100,000. Selling the stock would create a \$90,000 capital gain, while donating it would create a \$100,000 deduction and avoid capital gains tax. "It's a double tax benefit," Astrinos says.

### CONSIDER GIVING FROM YOUR IRA AFTER AGE 70

Qualified charitable distributions allow people 70½ and older to donate money directly from their individual retirement accounts, or IRAs, to charity. There is no tax deduction, but the money isn't included in their income, either. Qualified charitable distributions often appeal to people facing required minimum distributions from their retirement accounts but who don't need the income, Astrinos says. (The IRS requires people to withdraw minimum amounts from most retirement accounts — and pay taxes on that income — starting at age 72.) □

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# U.N. summit: Don't repeat mistakes on nature, scientists warn

By WANJOHI KABUKURU

Associated Press

MOMBASA, Kenya (AP) —

Scientists around the world are warning governments who will be gathering in Montreal this week for the United Nations biodiversity summit to not repeat past mistakes and are urging officials to "avoid trade-offs" between people and conservation needs in a report Monday.

The study published in the One Earth Journal found that even though there has been an increase in investment in conservation over the last three decades governments "have not succeeded in bending the curve on biodiversity decline."

The conference known as COP15, which begins Tuesday, hopes to set the goals for the world for the next decade to help conserve the planet's biodiversity and stem the loss of nature. So far the world has failed to meet goals set at previous meetings.

The scientists proposed six areas for action for delegates working toward what's known as the global biodiversity framework. They include greater involvement of local communities and addressing both direct causes of nature decline such as the destruction of land and habitats as well as indirect causes such as climate change.

In the report scientists repeatedly called for officials to be "nature and people



A Maasai man walks with his livestock in search of grassland for them to graze, at Ilangeruani village, near Lake Magadi, in Kenya, Nov. 9, 2022.

Associated Press

positive" in their approach, highlighting the need for solutions that are realistic and have support from local communities in order to best protect nature.

Instead of conserving areas by making them inaccessible to local people, the scientists said greater inclusion of communities and particularly Indigenous groups will be vital in curbing even more biodiversity loss. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions which fuel climate change that leads to the loss of land and species also needs to be addressed, the scientists said. "No amount of conservation or restoration actions may be effective in stopping biodiversity loss if the accelerating drivers of

decline continue and intensify, as has been the case to date, especially in wealthier countries and among elites, who often express commitment to conservation action," said David Obura, who is one of the report authors.

The growing demands of rich nations, in particular "excess consumption and unsustainable trade and investments" also need to be halted if groups are to be protected, co-author Diana Liverman said. "Consumption footprints in richer countries consistently drive biodiversity loss in poorer countries," she added.

Outside experts' views of how the summit can be a success were in line with

the report's findings.

"The Montreal COP needs to send that signal that the global economy is transitioning to be nature positive," said The Nature Conservancy's Linda Kreuger who wasn't part of the report.

"Much of the conversation in Montreal is likely to revolve around money and specifically how much of it wealthier countries are willing to make available to support the conservation efforts of emerging economies." □



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TODAY

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# Jazzy 'Charlie Brown Christmas' swings on after 57 years

By DAVID BAUDER

AP Entertainment Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The Mendelson family would love to find the envelope where their father, Lee, scribbled some lyrics to jazz musician Vince Guaraldi's composition "Christmas Time is Here" for an animated TV special featuring the "Peanuts" gang in 1965.

The producer always said it had taken less than half an hour to write, and he likely tossed the scrap of paper away. He was in a rush. Everything was rushed. No one even knew, once the special aired, whether it would ever be seen again. Instead, "A Charlie Brown Christmas" became an indelible holiday tradition and so, too, has Guaraldi's music perhaps even more so.

"Christmas just doesn't feel like Christmas without hearing that album in the background," said Derrick Bang, author of the biography "Vince Guaraldi at the Piano."

The special itself was a bit of an oddity: a cartoon story of the meaning of Christmas soundtracked by a sophisticated, mostly instrumental jazz trio of piano, bass and drum.

Yet it worked. Guaraldi's cascading piano evokes both motion and lightly falling snow on "Skating." The driving melody of "Linus and Lucy" is the eternal backdrop to a swinging party. "O Tannenbaum" shifts from the traditional carol to a bass-driven groove. A children's choir adds charm to "Christmas Time is Here."

The soundtrack has sold more than five million copies. Its nostalgia-fueled popularity has only grown, getting a crucial boost in 1998 when Starbucks began selling it in stores, and fed steadily by new products. The latest, a box set of outtakes released this year, came when Jason Mendelson, one of the late producer's four children, discovered tapes of Guaraldi's recording sessions in a Los Angeles warehouse while looking for something else.

"A Charlie Brown Christ-



This image released by Peanuts Worldwide shows promotional art for the 1965 animated TV special "A Charlie Brown Christmas." The soundtrack has sold more than five million copies.

Associated Press

mas" has aired every year since 1965, although that tradition is about to change.

The special's run on broadcast television ends this year. Apple TV+ bought the rights, and will stream it exclusively starting next year. While a recognition of television's new direction, will that reduce the chances of new generations of children happening upon the story and music?

"I just remember, back in the days of three channels and scheduled programming, that was one of those things we were excited about because we knew it was coming on and we were familiar with it," said Harry Connick Jr., who covered "Christmas Time is Here" for his own holiday disc just out.

"It was actually an amazing opportunity for music like that to be heard by a lot of people," added Connick, a jazz devotee even as a youngster. "It was not necessarily the kind of music that would be played on regular radio."

That's even less likely now, as jazz recedes into the history books or the background of dinner parties, said Nathaniel Sloan, musicologist at the University

of Southern California and co-host of the "Switched on Pop" podcast.

During the 1960s, jazz was closer to the mainstream and more likely to be played alongside pop music, he said.

The music Guaraldi created for the soundtrack is ambiguous and more complex than most holiday music, Sloan said. Tied to warm feelings for illustrator Charles M. Schulz's classic comic page characters, time has made it traditional holiday music.

The list of people who have recorded "Christmas Time is Here" is long and varied. They include John Legend, Alicia Keys, Gloria Estefan, Mariah Carey, Mel Tormé, Dave Brubeck, Sarah McLachlan, Stone Temple Pilots, Chicago, and Toni Braxton. Similarly, the unexpected places where the melody to "Linus and Lucy" have appeared testifies to how ingrained it is in American life. Michelle Obama played it on the piano when returning to her childhood home in the "Becoming" documentary. Foo Fighters included it in a rocking "Saturday Night Live" holiday medley. Prince banged it out during his last concert.

It all started in the San Francisco area, home base for Guaraldi, as it was for Mendelson and Schulz. Mendelson's popular documentary on Willie Mays Schulz's favorite baseball player convinced the reclusive cartoonist to participate in a "day in the life" film about his work.

One of Mendelson's favorite songs was Guaraldi's breezy hit, "Cast Your Fate to the Wind," so the jazzman was recruited for a soundtrack.

In the days before cable and streaming, Mendelson couldn't sell the documentary, so it went unseen.

After the popularity of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" in 1964, a sponsor asked Mendelson if he'd considered making a "Peanuts" Christmas special. He lied that he had. Schulz agreed to outline a story, and Guaraldi came aboard, too, recycling "Linus and Lucy" from the documentary.

Animation is time-consuming, so the team had a tight deadline to make it onto television. It was Mendelson who decided that "Christmas Time is Here" was missing something without lyrics. He asked several songwriters to take on

the task, but the deadline was too daunting.

So Mendelson sat in his office and did it himself: "Christmas time is here, happiness and cheer..."

"I've always loved the music and the melody, but I really didn't understand how beautiful the lyrics were until I recorded it," said Norah Jones, who included her take on the song on a disc released last year.

"The version with the children singing is so special," she told The Associated Press. "There's something very unique and heartwarming about children singing."

The St. Paul's Church Choir from San Rafael, California, was hired to sing "Christmas Time is Here" and "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." Producers infuriated the choir director by choosing a slightly out-of-tune version of the carol; they thought it captured an innocence they were seeking, said Bang, who wrote liner notes for the box set.

Some at CBS were nervous before the special aired. Executives wondered if viewers would accept their favorite comic strip characters come to "life" with voices and movement. Schulz's insistence that the show quote from the Bible gave it a religious focus that television entertainment typically steered clear of. But it was a hit, winning Peabody and Emmy awards, and never went away.

Guaraldi never had the chance to see his music age into standards. He died of a heart attack in 1976, only 47 years old.

"He's the best-known jazz musician whose name you don't know, because the music from the Christmas special has become so ubiquitous," Bang said.

Lee Mendelson died at 86 in 2019 — on Christmas Day. Jason is reluctant to say how much money his father earned from his few minutes of writing the "Christmas Time is Here" lyrics. Here's one hint: The song makes enough money, every year, to pay for all of the extended family's holiday shopping. □

# Bonds, Clemens left out of Hall again; McGriff elected

By JAY COHEN

AP Baseball Writer

**SAN DIEGO (AP)** — Moments after Fred McGriff was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame, almost two decades after his final game, he got the question. Asked if Barry Bonds belonged in Cooperstown, a smiling McGriff responded: "Honestly, right now, I'm going to just enjoy this evening."

A Hall of Fame committee delivered its answer Sunday, passing over Bonds, Roger Clemens and Curt Schilling while handing McGriff the biggest honor of his impressive big league career.

The lanky first baseman, nicknamed the "Crime Dog," hit .284 with 493 homers and 1,550 RBIs over 19 seasons with six major league teams. The five-time All-Star helped Atlanta win the 1995 World Series. McGriff got 169 votes (39.8%) in his final year on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot in 2019. Now, he will be inducted into Cooperstown on July 23, along with anyone chosen in the writers' vote, announced Jan. 24. "It's all good. It's been well worth the wait," said McGriff, who played his last big league game in 2004.

It was the first time that Bonds, Clemens and Schilling had faced a Hall committee since their 10th and final appearances on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot.



Former Atlanta Braves first baseman Fred McGriff smiles on the field before a baseball game against the Miami Marlins, Friday, Aug. 7, 2015, in Atlanta.

Bonds and Clemens have been accused of using performance-enhancing drugs, and support for Schilling dropped after he made hateful remarks toward Muslims, transgender people, reporters and others. While the 59-year-old McGriff received unanimous support from the 16 members of the contemporary baseball era committee comprised of Hall members, executives and writers Schilling got seven votes, and Bonds and Clemens each received fewer than four.

The makeup of the committee likely will change over the years, but the vote was another indication that Bonds and Clemens might never make it to the Hall.

This year's contemporary era panel included Greg Maddux, who played with McGriff on the Braves, along with Paul Beeston, who was an executive with Toronto when McGriff made his big league debut with the Blue Jays in 1986. Another ex-Brave, Chipper Jones, was expected to be part of the committee, but he tested positive for COVID-19 and was replaced by Arizona Diamondbacks President Derrick Hall. The contemporary era committee considers candidates whose careers were primarily from 1980 on. A player needs 75% to be elected. "It's tough deciding on who to vote for and who not to vote for and so forth," McGriff said.

"So it's a great honor to be unanimously voted in."

In addition to all his big hits and memorable plays, one of McGriff's enduring legacies is his connection to a baseball skills video from youth coach Tom Emanski. The slugger appeared in a commercial for the product that aired regularly during the late 1990s and early 2000s wearing a blue Baseball World shirt and hat. McGriff said he has never seen the video.

"Come Cooperstown, I've got to wear my blue hat," a grinning McGriff said. "My Tom Emanski hat in Cooperstown. See that video is going to make a revival now, it's going to come back." Hall of Famers Jack Morris, Ryne Sandberg, Lee Smith,

Frank Thomas and Alan Trammell also served on this year's committee, which met in San Diego at baseball's winter meetings.

Rafael Palmeiro, Albert Belle, Don Mattingly and Dale Murphy rounded out the eight-man ballot. Mattingly was next closest to election, with eight votes of 12 required. Murphy had six.

Bonds, Clemens and Schilling fell short in January in their final chances with the BBWAA. Bonds received 260 of 394 votes (66%), Clemens 257 (65.2%) and Schilling 231 (58.6%).

Palmeiro was dropped from the BBWAA ballot after receiving 25 votes (4.4%) in his fourth appearance in 2014, falling below the 5% minimum needed to stay on. His high was 72 votes (12.6%) in 2012.

Bonds has denied knowingly using performance-enhancing drugs, and Clemens maintains he never used PEDs. Palmeiro was suspended for 10 days in August 2005 following a positive test under the major league drug program. A seven-time NL MVP, Bonds set the career home run record with 762 and the season record with 73 in 2001.

A seven-time Cy Young Award winner, Clemens went 354-184 with a 3.12 ERA and 4,672 strikeouts, third behind Nolan Ryan (5,714) and Randy Johnson (4,875). Palmeiro had 3,020 hits and 568 homers. □

# Kershaw returning to Dodgers on \$20M, 1-year deal

By BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Clayton Kershaw will pitch for the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2023 after re-signing in a \$20 million, one-year deal. For the second straight year, the Dodgers didn't extend a qualifying offer to the three-time Cy Young Award winner. Instead, they gave him additional time to mull his future, and he once again decided to stay with the only franchise

he's ever played for during his 15-year major league career.

The deal includes a \$5 million signing bonus payable on June 30, a salary of \$15 million and a hotel suite on road trips.

The 34-year-old left-hander was 12-3 with 2.28 ERA in 22 starts last season. He struck out 137 and walked 23. Kershaw made his ninth All-Star team and started the Midsummer Classic for the first time in his career at

Dodger Stadium.

Last April, he became the franchise's all-time strikeout leader with 2,697. He reached 2,800 strikeouts in his last start of the regular season on Oct. 5 against Colorado. Kershaw ranks 24th all-time with 2,807. Kershaw has a career record of 197-87 with a 2.48 ERA. He won his only World Series title in 2020, when the Dodgers beat Tampa Bay during the pandemic-shortened season. □



Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Clayton Kershaw throws to the plate during the first inning of a baseball game against the Colorado Rockies Friday, Sept. 30, 2022, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

# Panthers waive struggling QB Mayfield, a former No. 1 pick

By STEVE REED

AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) —

The short-lived Baker Mayfield era is over in Carolina. The Panthers waived the struggling quarterback on Monday after the 2018 No. 1 draft pick asked for his release. Mayfield would be subject to waivers and become a free agent if he goes unclaimed.

The move does not come as a surprise, because Sam Darnold replaced Mayfield after his failed second stint as starting quarterback, and the Panthers like what they have in backup P.J. Walker. The move gives Mayfield a chance to potentially land with a team that needs quarterback help. San Francisco's Jimmy Garoppolo, Jacksonville's Trevor Lawrence and Baltimore's Lamar Jackson all suffered injuries over the weekend.

Panthers interim coach Steve Wilks said Mayfield asked for his release once he informed the quarterbacks that Darnold would be the team's starter and Walker would be the backup this Sunday at Seattle.



Carolina Panthers quarterback Baker Mayfield (6) walks off the field after his team's loss to the Baltimore Ravens after an NFL football game Sunday, Nov. 20, 2022, in Baltimore.

Associated Press

"Baker has been nothing but a professional since he's been here, a complete pro," Wilks said. "I have tremendous respect for him." Wilks said he made the decision to go with Walker over Mayfield as the backup after "looking at the body of work the last couple of weeks. I felt

P.J. has been productive when he was in there." Mayfield was 1-5 as Carolina's starting QB and completed just 57.8% of his passes, having six touchdowns and six interceptions. He also struggled with tipped passes at the line of scrimmage. The Panthers are last in the league in third-down

conversions.

Wilks said he couldn't pinpoint why Mayfield didn't work out in Carolina.

"I can't answer that question," Wilks said. "It is so many different reasons. I wouldn't say that he failed. I would say that it just didn't work out. He is still a good football player. Just like

coaches and just like players, sometimes they need a change."

Panthers general manager Scott Fitterer traded for Mayfield earlier this season after unsuccessfully trying to acquire Deshaun Watson from the Houston Texans, and he beat out Darnold for the starting job in training camp. Darnold later injured his ankle and landed on injured reserve and only recently returned to action. Carolina will send the Cleveland Browns a fifth-round pick in 2024 as compensation.

Fitterer was not made available to reporters on Monday. "I think he handled the situation the right way. Even with his ups and downs you never saw him act different or have a mood change. He was always the same guy. So I respect him and wish the best for him."

Guard Austin Corbett said Mayfield stopped by the offensive line meeting room to inform them that he'd been released before leaving Bank of America Stadium, thanking them and telling them he loved them. □

# Carlos Alcaraz youngest year-end No. 1 in ATP rankings

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

Teenager Carlos Alcaraz is the youngest year-end No. 1 in the history of the ATP computerized rankings and joins fellow Spaniard Rafael Nadal as the first players from the same country

to claim the top two spots at the close of a season since Americans Pete Sampras and Michael Chang in 1996.

The final men's tennis rankings for 2022 were published Monday, and Alcaraz's rise from No. 32 at the end of

2021 is the largest single-season jump to No. 1.

Iga Swiatek finished the year with a substantial lead in the final WTA rankings, which were released last month. The 21-year-old from Poland moved up from No. 2 in April to lead the list for the first time after Ash Barty suddenly retired. Swiatek never relinquished her hold, helped by earning major championships at the French Open and U.S. Open. Ons Jabeur the runner-up at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open closed the season at a career-best No. 2.

Alcaraz, who turned 19 in May, has remained atop the rankings since he won his first Grand Slam title at the U.S. Open in September by beating Casper Ruud in the final.

That made Alcaraz the first male teen at No. 1 since

the ATP computerized rankings began in 1973.

He is the first man in 20 years other than Nadal, Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic or Andy Murray since Andy Roddick in 2003 to finish at No. 1.

Alcaraz ended his season early after tearing an abdominal muscle while competing at the Paris Masters a month ago.

The 36-year-old Nadal, meanwhile, is the oldest man to finish a year ranked first or second. He also extended his own record by placing in the top 10 at the end of a year for the 18th consecutive season.

The recently retired Federer is the only other man with that many top-10 finishes over the course of a career. Nadal won the Australian Open and French Open to raise his men's-record Grand Slam total to 22

trophies, one ahead of Djokovic and two ahead of Federer.

Ruud finishes at No. 3, followed by No. 4 Stefanos Tsitsipas, No. 5 Djokovic, No. 6 Felix Auger-Aliassime, No. 7 Daniil Medvedev, No. 8 Andrey Rublev, No. 9 Taylor Fritz and No. 10 Hubert Hurkacz.

Djokovic couldn't play at the Australian Open or U.S. Open because he is not vaccinated against COVID-19 and didn't earn any rankings boost for his title at Wimbledon because the WTA and ATP stripped that tournament of any points over the All England Club's ban on players from Russia and Belarus.

Fritz is the first American man to close a year in the top 10 since John Isner in 2018. The nine U.S. men in the top 50 were the most for any country. □



Rafael Nadal, of Spain, right, greets compatriot Carlos Alcaraz after defeating him in the men's singles semifinals at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament Saturday, March 19, 2022, in Indian Wells, Calif.

Associated Press